



## Colorado River Basin Ten Tribes Partnership

September 17, 2015

Gina McCarthy, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1101A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Shaun McGrath, Regional Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 8, 8OC-EISC  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202-1129

Jared Blumenfeld, Regional Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: ***Request for Meeting to Discuss U.S. EPA Findings and Response to the Gold King Mine Spill, Related Threats, and Coordination of Future Actions to Protect Tribal Colorado River Water Quality***

Dear Administrator(s) McCarthy, McGrath, and Blumenfeld:

The Ten Tribes Partnership is composed of ten tribes with reserved water rights in the Colorado River. Those tribes with reserved water rights in the Upper Basin include: Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Jicarilla Apache Nation. Those tribes with reserved water rights in the Lower Basin include: Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Quechan Indian Tribe and Cocopah Indian Tribe. The Navajo Nation has reserved water rights in the Upper Basin and the Lower Basin. The ten federally-recognized Indian tribes comprise the Colorado

River Basin Tribes Partnership (a/k/a, "Ten Tribes Partnership"), established for the purpose of developing and protecting tribal water resources and addressing technical, economic, and practical issues related to the operation of the Colorado River.

To that end, the Ten Tribes Partnership finds that its individual member tribes share similar concerns regarding the Gold King spill, and likewise share profound concerns regarding the looming threat posed by the many similar contaminated mine sites in the Colorado River Watershed. All such contamination sites put the Colorado River at risk. In light of the ongoing pressures on the Colorado River system, and the recent unfortunate events involving spillage of contaminated water from the Gold King mine into Cement Creek, the Animas River, the San Juan River, and ultimately, into the Colorado River itself, we believe it is appropriate and timely to schedule a meeting between the Partnership representatives and EPA leadership to discuss responses to these critical issues.

The Ten Tribes Partnership requests a meeting with EPA Regional Administrators from Region 8 and Region 9, at EPA's earliest convenience. The Ten Tribes Partnership is currently scheduled to meet in Las Vegas on October 14 and is hopeful that the requested meeting can be scheduled at that time. Otherwise, the Partnership meets regularly in either Albuquerque, New Mexico, or Phoenix, Arizona and would be happy to host this meeting at a time and location suitable to all.

The potential topics of discussion are:

- i.) The nature and impacts of the Gold King spill, including discussion of the latest testing data.
- ii.) EPA's ongoing response to the Gold King spill, and its plan for continued oversight;
- iii.) To what extent do similar situations exist along the Colorado River, and which of those contamination sites may foreseeably impact the quantity and quality of the waters of the Colorado River in the near future and long-term?
- iv.) How can tribal governments help the EPA respond to contamination threats in the future, in order that it may fulfill its mission to protect, preserve and, where necessary, proactively remediate contamination sites that threaten the waters of the Colorado River?

Please contact Doug Bonamici at (928) 669-1271 or [dbonamici@critdoj.com](mailto:dbonamici@critdoj.com) to schedule the meeting.

Sincerely,



Melvin J. Baker  
Vice-Chairman  
Ten Tribes Partnership

cc: Dennis Patch, Chairman  
Ten Tribes Partnership